

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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2018 Yukon River Fall Salmon Fishery News Release 66 **Fall Update # 11, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery** Districts Affected: Yukon Area

The 2018 inseason total run size of fall chum salmon (based on passage at the mainstem sonar near Pilot Station plus the harvest downstream of the sonar) is estimated to be 1,300,000 fish, which is above the historical median of 816,000 fish. Overall the timing of fall chum salmon in the lower river projects was a week later than average. The fifth pulse of fall chum salmon, which was the largest of the season, is expected to be near the U.S./Canada border around October 5. The smaller sixth pulse contained a majority of Tanana River bound stocks.

Coho salmon were three days later than average at the mainstem Yukon River sonar site at Pilot Station. The inseason total run size of coho salmon (based on passage at the mainstem sonar near Pilot Station plus the harvest downstream of the sonar) is estimated to be 236,000 fish, which is above the historical median of 209,000 fish. Coho salmon are expected to be within the Tanana River typically peaking around mid to late October.

Fall Assessment Projects

Lower Yukon River Cooperative Fall Drift Test Fishing / ADF&G, YDFDA

This project concluded operations on September 10, 2018. The fall chum salmon cumulative CPUE for the project was 2,961.66, which was above the historical median of 1,520.50 for this date. The coho salmon cumulative CPUE was 381.96, which is below the historical median of 443.37 for this date.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing / Asacarsarmiut Traditional Council

This project concluded operations on September 12, 2018. The fall chum salmon cumulative CPUE for the project was 3,018.41, which is above the historical median of 2,051.51 for this date. The coho salmon cumulative CPUE was 679.52, which is below the historical median of 1,121.91 for this date.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station / ADF&G

The mainstem sonar near Pilot Station completed operations for 2018 season on September 7. The cumulative passage estimate was 929,000 fall chum salmon, which is above the median passage of

approximately 707,000 fish for that date. Fall chum salmon run timing was seven days later than average at this project. The cumulative passage estimate for coho salmon was 136,000 coho salmon which is below the median of 160,000 for that date. Coho salmon run timing was four days later than average at this project.

Chandalar River Sonar / USFWS

The cumulative passage attributed to fall chum salmon through September 26, is 130,579 fish which is well below the median of 218,000 fish for that date. The lower end of the Biological Escapement Goal range from 74,000 to 152,000 was achieved on September 18.

Sonar Project near Eagle / ADF&G, DFO

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage estimate through September 30 was 98,675, which is below the median passage of approximately 145,000 fish for this date. The Interim Management Escapement Goal (IMEG) range after U.S. and Canada harvests above the sonar project is 70,000 to 104,000 fall chum salmon. Currently, the lower end of the IMEG has been achieved after U.S. and Canada harvests are considered.

Upper Porcupine Sonar / Yukon Territory Canada / DFO

This project had some difficulties with high water at the beginning of the season. One bank operations began on August 27 while the second bank became operational on September 6. The cumulative passage attributed to fall chum salmon based on partial operations is 11,780 fish which is below the average of 31,000 through September 28. Run timing is expected to be late based on other downstream assessment projects. The Porcupine River stocks appear very weak relative the overall run size.

Fishing Branch River Weir/Sonar / Yukon Territory Canada / DFO

Water levels began higher than average and delayed deployment of the weir. Sonar operations began on September 3 as the weir was being assembled. The estimated passage as of September 30 was 4,371 fall chum salmon which is well below the median of 21,000 for this date. Counts prior to September 15 (the day the river was fully ensnared) are considered minimum estimates. Similarly, run timing is expected to be late based on other downstream assessment projects. The Interim Management Escapement Goal range for this system is 22,000 to 49,000 fall chum salmon, at the current passage levels the goal will likely not be achieved.

Chum Salmon Stock Identification

Genetic mixed stock analysis of chum salmon for the entire fall season, from July 19-September 7, that passed the mainstem Yukon River sonar contained approximately 17% summer chum and 83% fall chum salmon. The fall component only entering after July 19, represented 28% BorderUS (Chandalar/Sheenjek), 30% Canadian, and 42% Tanana Fall stocks.

Fall Season Management Strategy:

Subsistence fishermen may use 7.5 inch or smaller mesh size gillnets and fish wheels in all areas of the Yukon River. Because of the Chinook salmon restrictions put in place in the Yukon Area this season, the department increased the opportunity to harvest fall chum salmon for subsistence use to seven days per week, 24 hours per day in all of Districts 4 and 5.

The fall chum salmon run into the upper Porcupine River appears to be poor and is projecting to fall short of the treaty interim management escapement goal (IMEG) established by the US and

Canada treaty for fall chum salmon. To improve fall chum escapement to the spawning grounds in Canada, the subsistence salmon fishing schedule in the Alaska portion of the mainstem Porcupine River is being changed to a full closure. In recent years, the abundance of fall chum salmon in the upper Porcupine River has been low when compared to other stocks in the Yukon River drainage. Managers will closely monitor inseason information at the mainstem Porcupine River sonar and the Fishing Branch River escapement monitoring projects to determine future management actions as appropriate.

Subsistence Fishing Schedule:**South Coastal District, and Districts 1, 2, 3, and 4 including the Innoko River:**

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week, with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

Koyukuk River:

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

District 5 (from Illinois Creek upstream to the U.S./Canada border, and including all adjacent tributaries, which includes all the communities between Tanana and Eagle):

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

A fishing permit is required to fish for all species in the following locations: the portions of Subdistricts 5-C and 5-D from the western most tip of Garnet Island upstream to the mouth of Dall River (Dalton Highway bridge area) and from the upstream mouth of 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border. Subsistence fishermen outside of the permit areas are encouraged to fill out their subsistence salmon catch calendars. Calendars and subsistence fishing permits are available from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in Fairbanks.

Porcupine River:

Subsistence salmon fishing is open weekly from 12:00 noon Thursdays to 12:00 noon Mondays in the Porcupine River. This includes those portions of the mainstem Yukon River around the 3 mouths of the Porcupine River. Subsistence salmon fishing in tributaries such as the Sheenjek, Black, Coleen, and Salmon Trout rivers will remain open 24 hours a day, seven days per week.

Effective 12:00 noon Wednesday, October 3, subsistence salmon fishing in the Porcupine River, including those portions of the mainstem Yukon River around the 3 mouths of the Porcupine River, is closed until further notice. During the closures, fishermen may fish for non-salmon species using gillnet gear with a mesh size of 4 inches or less. Subsistence salmon fishing in tributaries such as the Sheenjek, Black, Coleen, and Salmon Trout rivers will remain open 24 hours a day, seven days per week.

Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the regulatory marker at the mouth of Wood River, which includes the communities of Manley, Minto, and Nenana):

Subsistence fishing is open for two 42-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels from:

6 p.m. Fridays to 12 noon Sundays

6 p.m. Mondays to 12 noon Wednesdays

A subsistence fishing permit is required to fish for salmon in the Tanana River drainage below the Wood River. Permits are available from the ADF&G office in Fairbanks. Subsistence salmon fishermen in the upper portion of Subdistrict 6-B, from three miles upstream of the mouth of Totchaket Slough to Wood River, are required to report their harvest catches to the department by 4:30 p.m. Thursday each week by reporting online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/PU/ or by calling (907) 459-7388. When you call, please provide your name, permit number, fishing location, and daily catch by species for that week.

Kantishna River:

The Kantishna River is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week. Fishermen may use fish wheels or gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less. A subsistence fishing permit is required.

Old Minto Area:

Subsistence fishing is currently open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels on the regulatory schedule of five days per week from:

6 p.m. Fridays until 6 p.m. Wednesdays

Upper Tanana Area (the Tanana River from the confluence with the mouth of Volkmar River on the north bank and the mouth of the Johnson River on the south bank upstream to the Tanana River headwaters):

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets and fish wheels. A subsistence fishing permit is required.

Personal Use Fishing:

Subdistrict 6-C (from the regulatory marker at the mouth of the Wood River upstream to the Salcha River, which includes the communities of Fairbanks, North Pole, and Salcha):

Personal use fishing is open for two 42-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels from:

6 p.m. Fridays to 12 noon Sundays

6 p.m. Mondays to 12 noon Wednesdays

A personal use salmon fishing permit and sport fish license are required to fish in Subdistrict 6-C. Fishermen are required to report their harvest catches to the department by **4:30 p.m. Thursday** each week by reporting online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/PU/ or by calling **(907) 459-7388**. When you call, please provide your name, permit number, fishing location, and daily catch by species for that week.

Fall Season Commercial Salmon Fishing:

In the Upper Yukon, commercial fishing is open in District 6 until further notice. Fishermen must confirm they have a buyer prior to fishing. Processors, catcher-sellers, or direct marketers

are required to notify the department of their intent to operate by contacting the Fairbanks office at 459-7274. The commercial season in Districts 4 and 5 closed on September 30th.

District 6 Commercial (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the regulatory marker at the mouth of Wood River, upstream to the Chena River, which includes the communities of Manley, Nenana, and Fairbanks):

Commercial fishing is open for two 42-hour periods per week with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels:

- **6 p.m. Fridays to 12 noon Sundays**
- **6 p.m. Mondays to 12 noon Wednesdays**

The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through September 30th in District 6 is 7,318 fall chum salmon and 1,401 coho salmon.

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